

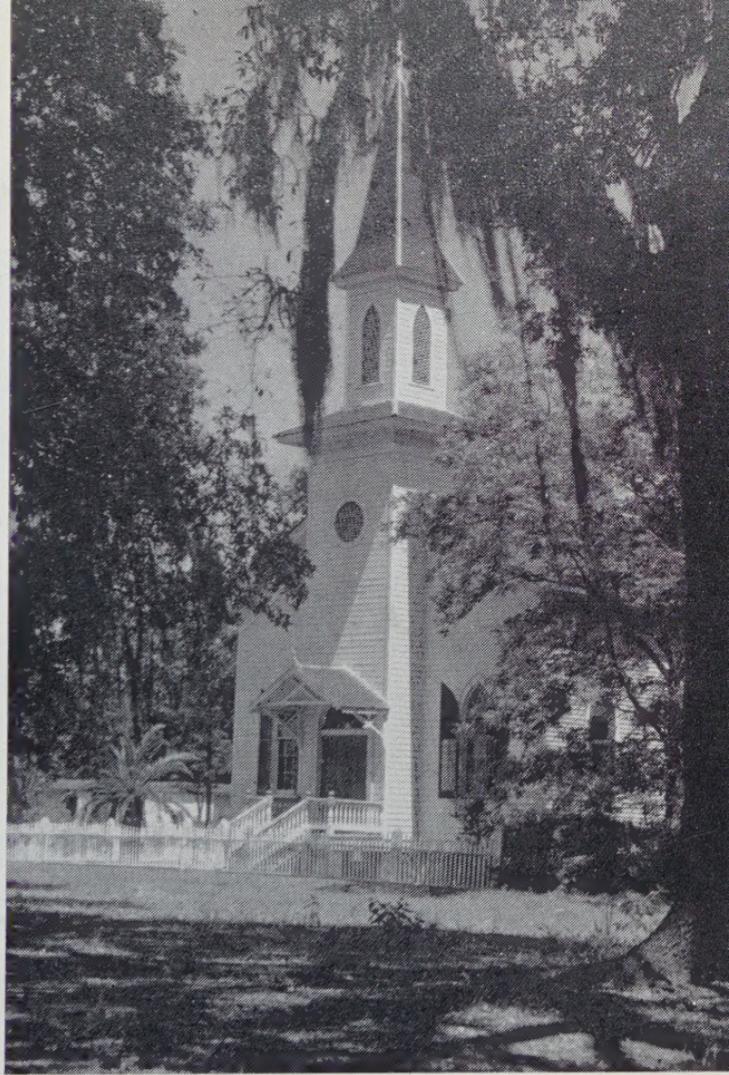
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FOR CHURCH
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WORKERS

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CHURCH SCHOOL *Teacher*



THE CHURCH SCHOOL TEACHER

VOLUME XIV No. 3

MARCH 1945

J. VINCENT NORDGREN

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The Church School Teacher

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The Teacher of Youth

By W. C. EGBERT

WE are thinking especially of the boys and girls of confirmation age. In this period of youth the teacher has a golden opportunity as well as a grave responsibility. Both mind and spirit of the pupil at this age are susceptible to wise guidance. Long experience with such boys and girls will convince any teacher that he is dealing with a critical period of young life. It is a period when youth is determined to stand on its own feet; and yet, underneath this determination youth craves for direction from some one whom it can trust. The teacher can be that one provided he be mature and consecrated enough and at the same time willing to put himself on the adolescent level.

At this age the pupil is laboring under what we may call a dual nature: the nature of independence and of dependence, the former paraded in the foreground and the latter kept in the background. Since this is true, the counsel, guidance and direction must be very tactful yet positive. Precepts stated positively are of more worth than negations. But your example will be far more weighty than precepts. Children will imitate. Their ideal may be father or mother, or it may be the teacher. It has been well said: "Character is caught, as well as taught." Whether or not it should be so, it remains a fact that at this age many youth will rely more fully on a teacher's direction than on that of parents.

Since a teacher has such a tremendous influence in shaping young life he holds a position that can not be taken lightly. Hence, unless one is interested in youth he has no business trying to teach them. Because of the increase of juvenile delinquency many agencies are concerning themselves with the physical, intellectual, social and moral sides of youth. The teacher of religion is not forgetful of these, but is primarily interested in the spiritual side of the young. He wants to guide and direct them to realize "the abundant life" which Jesus brought into this world—not adding years to life but adding life to years. This can be realized only by inculcating Christian principles in the minds of youth.

The position of the teacher of religion is made more difficult because many parents are not sufficiently concerned about the salvation of their children. This lack of concern seems to be on the increase in our present days of stress. And there is danger that in the post-war days things will not improve. The disruption of the homes is nation wide. Parents are financially able to provide food, shelter, raiment and entertainment more abundantly. And because of the many agencies for recreation away

from home there is little time for the family get-together. Parents who insist that their children be regular in public school attendance are often indifferent concerning their attendance in church school and worship. Some go so far as to say that they do not want to "force" their child in religion, when he grows up he may decide for himself. All this results in neglect of spiritual development.

We have not outlived the wise statement of Solomon: "Bring up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it." The delinquent children of our nation are not coming from homes where parents are interested in their soul's well-being and who are under the influence of Christian teachers, but from homes where children are left to shift for themselves and who have no spiritual guidance otherwise.

The teacher should always keep in mind that the youth of today will be the men and women of tomorrow. The heart soil into which the seed is planted is susceptible and rich. It will always remain true: "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Since children are exposed to so many temptations it is all the more important

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The Call of the Cross

HERE we are, entering upon another season of Lent. Down through the centuries this season has come to be revered and used by an increasing number of Christians as a time for special prayer, meditation and spiritual discipline. As it comes back to us again this year, it sets before each of us an open door to rich experience and inner growth.

The central figure of Lent is not self, but Christ. Yet it is Christ in relation to each of us; for He has come to bear our griefs and carry our sorrows. Only as He is permitted to do that for each of us does Lent have meaning and value to us as persons.

Lent bids us remember Him as the Man of Sorrows. The New Testament record sets Him before us as acquainted with grief. He can be touched with the feeling of our infirmities. This is important news any day, but it is especially so at a time when the world is torn by war, parents and wives are worried over the safety of sons and husbands, and many a man in uniform is constantly in danger. Christ has not promised that there shall be no sorrow among His peo-

ple, but He has promised and proved Himself the adequate source of comfort and quiet strength to those who turn to Him.

"Come not in terrors as the King of kings,
But kind and good, with healing on
Thy wings;
Tears for all woes, a heart for every
plea;
O Friend of sinners, thus abide with
me."

Lent also summons us to repentance. For the story of the cross bids us to behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world. The cross that Christ bore is the terrible symbol of the judgment of God upon sin. It shows the consequence to the Man of Sorrows of all other men's disobedience to the holy will of God, from the time of Adam and Eve's self-assertion down to the sins of the present moment. Every act of disobedience to the highest and best we know crucifies Him anew in our streets, in our churches, our homes, factories, places of business, and in our own hearts.

Repentance is more than an emotional experience that all too

often stops at morbid introspection. To repent means to be sorry enough over sin to resolve honestly and earnestly to quit. It means to change one's mind, nay, to change one's way by turning the entire direction of one's life. It means bringing forth fruits worthy of repentance. True repentance never takes place in the abstract, unrelated to the realities of life. It takes place only in relation to what a man says, does, purposes, feels, and really is. Repentance always touches life.

Again, Lent summons us to bear the cross. Men of Jesus' day rebelled at His teaching. "It can't be lived; away with Him and His teaching!" Those who try to live as He teaches have always had to share this cross with Him. There never was a time when it did not cost something to be a Christian.

In spite of the general supposition that America is a Christian nation it is well to remember that on the basis of the 1936 census, less than 40 per cent of the American population claims any definite Christian affiliation whatsoever, and that of the 40 per cent enrolled in the church a distressingly large number of nominal Christians give evidence of being content to remain nominal and noth-

ing more. To many of them the claims of the cross do not seem to matter at all. They like to think of the comfort they can draw from the Man of Sorrows in times of distress, but they overlook the fact that a Christ whose call to repentance and cross-bearing has been rejected has also been shut out from His gracious ministry of comfort and healing when emergencies arise.

All of which reminds us that even after nineteen hundred years Christianity is not really popular. There has never been any great crowding at the gate that is strait and opens to the way that is narrow. Christians are still in the minority. It is high time for them to shoulder again the burden of a militant, cross-bearing, witnessing minority. For by a militant minority, the world can be changed for Christ.

Memorial Gifts

RECENTLY the Board of Parish Education of the Augustana Synod received a letter from Pastor Erland Borg of Thabor Lutheran Church, Wausa, Nebraska, in which two checks were enclosed, one for one hundred dol-

lars, and one for two hundred dollars.

The first is an In Memoriam for one of the Sunday school boys, Clifford Bjorkman, who passed away last October at the age of ten. Many friends of the family had made In Memoriam gifts, which at the suggestion of the parents were all turned over to the Sunday school. The school added to these gifts and sent a check for an even hundred dollars. Explaining the gifts, Pastor Borg writes:

"Mr. and Mrs. Bjorkman felt that inasmuch as their son had been such a faithful member of our Sunday school, this memorial gift could be used to good advantage in Parish Education so that other boys and girls might come to know Jesus as their Saviour, even as Clifford had."

"The other check in the amount of two hundred dollars is given by Mr. and Mrs. Carl O. Olson and their daughter Eleanor. Their only son and brother died as a result of wounds received in the South Pacific. . . . These parents appreciate the work of the Sunday school and feel that it made an important contribution to their eternal welfare."

Fundamental

JESUS CHRIST was a teacher. This is a fact with which we are so familiar that we are in danger of overlooking its importance.

The Christian Century commented recently on the report that keeps coming back from chaplains to the effect that the men who stand up best under the terrific strain of the army or navy are those who know the purpose of life and whose souls are undergirded by an abiding sense of God's willingness and power to help. Those who lack faith and who perhaps never had any definite, dependable instruction in the Word of God are more likely to break under the strain.

One chaplain is quoted as saying: "If I ever get back into a parish, I shall teach and teach and teach. Everything that goes on which does not teach I shall regard as superfluous. I shall not call except to teach, nor preach except to teach, nor pay attention to guilds except to teach, nor go to a vestry meeting except to teach, nor read except to teach."

The winter issue of *The National Lutheran* emphasizes the same point when Chaplain Gerhard Belgum writes:

"The moral and religious weaklings, the men of no faith over here, come almost invariably from churches, if any at all, and homes where no concerted effort to teach the young is made. The faithful men, who not only continue their religious observances but draw great strength and comfort from their Lord in hours of need, come

from churches and homes where God's will, His love, His mastery, are taught and believed.

"Pretty obvious, isn't it? Any one can see this cause and effect...

"And let's not forget—that's the Great Commission: to teach and baptize people of all nations. Dare we forget our own children?"

The Fool Hath Said

One day the French infidel Voltaire said to a friend, "It took twelve ignorant fishermen to establish Christianity; I will show the world how one Frenchman can destroy it."

Setting to his task, he openly ridiculed Sir Isaac Newton. One day Newton made a prophecy based on Daniel 12. 4 and Nahum 2. 4 when he said, "Man will some day be able to travel at the tremendous speed of 40 miles an hour."

Voltaire replied with, "See what a fool Christianity makes of an otherwise brilliant man, such as Sir Isaac Newton. Doesn't he know that if man traveled 40 miles an hour, he would suffocate and his heart would stop?"

To top the irony of Voltaire's futile efforts, 25 years after he died, his home was purchased by the Geneva Bible Society and became a Bible storage building, while Voltaire's printing press was used to print an entire edition of the Bible.—*The Living Word*.

What Is the Answer?

By CECELIA ANDERSON

FIFTY interested young people were diligently searching the Word. The group assembled for study was the regular Sunday morning Young People's class. Fifty was not an unusual number in attendance, I was told—they always had at least fifty in attendance. The teacher was a housewife, one of the many housewives who volunteer their services for the church school. She was an able leader and had the enthusiasm necessary to teach youth. The group was studying the Book of Leviticus. The class was concerned about the laws given by God to His chosen people of old, but they were also interested in finding out how the gems of truth from this book applied to their own lives. Youthful hearts burned with enthusiastic response to the challenge presented to them in this day's lesson; one could sense it in the questions they asked. I was but an observer of this class, but my heart was warmed as I studied the Word together with them and saw flames of service kindled at the divine altar this Sabbath morning. As I left

the study group, I was keenly aware that young people love the Word of God and need to be given every opportunity and encouragement for its study.

What is the answer to a successful young people's Bible class? Has your church found the answer? Is it the *teacher*. Is it the *course of study*? Is it the *method* of teaching? Is it the *young people* themselves? After a bit of thought you will probably answer, "The successful young people's class depends upon a combination of important factors." I would consider the class which I visited a successful class. Why?

The class under consideration was made up of boys and girls of about 15 to 17 years of age. The characteristics which define all youth can be applied to this adolescent assembly. The spirit of youth can be likened to the month of April—a gay, flippant, restless month carrying in its womb the seeds of springtime that will bear the fruitage of autumn. The changeable nature of youth at first appearance might discourage the

serious adult. But can we not say which boisterous spirit may carry the seed of a great Christian leader?

As I observed it, the foremost reason why this class rates as superior is because the teacher understood her pupils and met their needs through the class. She was not an unusual individual, but she did possess the innate qualities which make a teacher, and she was earnest in her purpose to serve youth. The pupils were ordinary boys and girls. But I sensed that the teacher had a keen understanding and sympathy for young people; she skillfully employed what she knew of youth when teaching her class.

The class was studying the Book of Leviticus. It would be an unusual youth, I am sure, who could study the Book of Leviticus by himself and find it fascinating. The book is difficult to follow, but this teacher had her pupils eager in searching its pages.

First, she knew that youth of this age has a deep sense of their need of God, and that during these days come decisions of dedication. Youth must be challenged! She led her class to find Him in this book; and she helped them to know that God not only challenged

His people of long ago, but His challenge of "Be ye holy, as I am holy" was also for them. She helped them catch the vision of service which requires God's holiness.

Second, she understood that boys and girls like to do things for themselves. There is a spirit of investigation; they want the facts. She pointed them to passage after passage, reference after reference, which they looked up to compare with the theme they were studying. The boys and girls were busy with pencils jotting down references to be looked up at home. Incidental topics which applied to the lesson were assigned to the pupils to be prepared during the week and reported on at the next session.

The teacher was also aware that her pupils' mental powers were opening on new horizons; for example, they were developing their powers of reasoning. Her age-group of pupils were facing personal problems, such as life work, sex, marriage, money, and many others. Her pupils were led to reason for themselves; they were encouraged to bring up their own problems suggested by this day's lesson, and she helped them find in God's Word a light unto their feet.

Like a wise youth counsellor, this teacher sensed that her place was not so much that of a teacher as a friend and guide. Her place was to point the way to youth. She let her pupils teach themselves. She provided opportunities within the class for the expression of youth's personality. It was significant that as I entered the class I was immediately greeted by a member of the class. He had been trained well in his role. He was an able host, and I was made to feel at home with the group, though I was but a visitor. I noticed that the class had its own officers, and the president took charge of the opening worship service although there were others of the class that shared the responsibilities of it, as in the song-leading, Scripture reading, and the prayer. The secretary took care of recording the attendance and other duties that would be a part of this office.

That the class had been taught

to share with others was important. It was not surprising that the class numbered fifty when one learned that no stone was left unturned in telling others about their Bible class. I noticed through the announcements that several service projects were under way. Outstanding among these service projects was money for missions. Outside the regular channels to which their offering was designated, they had given well over one hundred dollars to missions over a period of a few months. The young people had caught the vision that to have they must share!

What is the answer to a successful young people's class? Youth and a teacher who together are seeking a closer relationship with God and a meaningful expression of their lives—a vital purpose. Young people whose ways are understood by adults and who are guided in finding the fulfillment of their needs through their Bible study class.

It doesn't matter whether a person knows *how* to teach Christianity or not, if he doesn't know what Christianity *is*.

*The Churches Making Vacations Count**

By RUTH ELIZABETH MURPHY

WHEN last year was ended—filled with reports of the increase of juvenile delinquency, working mothers, fathers away in military service, uprooted families, and all the wartime tensions—did your church reports show that all the opportunities to help the boys and girls had been used? Did the summer period show a blank report?—or had the summer yielded rich rewards in the church's outreach, children's growth in Christian character and the development of Christian fellowships in ever widening circles? Many new, larger, longer or better vacation church schools were held last summer. Did your church help? Did your church send on its report to encourage others?

How Can We Have Better Vacation Church Schools?

First, by having a strong sponsoring group who will work all the year around; who are sup-

ported by the whole church or group of churches; and who co-operate with other community agencies.

Second, by having a hard-working committee who plans a study program including worship, work, service, study and play—preferably on a three-year cycle.

Third, by having a leadership training committee who selects, recruits and helps prepare the leadership for all the types of work needed to conduct the vacation church school.

Recruiting and Preparing Leaders

There are many methods used: sermons showing the needs of boys and girls and asking for volunteers; the use of the material, "Volunteers in Christian Service to Children," using the statement "volunteering for service" to be signed; hand-picking those who are capable and calling in their homes to invite them to serve; finding seminary and college students to help; and getting the churches to hunt for those who have hobbies or who

* This article was made available through syndicated services of the International Council of Religious Education.

have traveled and can share their experiences with boys and girls.

The question of employing a director for a number of schools, the principals and the teacher is best decided in view of the local situation. Sometimes, the best leadership is the volunteer group who know the local situation best. When they are continually being trained for this work, they have the most to give. But in other cases, no one is trained or can spare the time for a long school. Then other plans have been made. Long schools usually require financial help even for local people.

The Los Angeles Federation of Churches has employed a director and ten teachers for weekday and vacation church schools. For nine months they teach in weekday church schools and in the summer they take charge of vacation church schools in the new housing areas or in underprivileged areas. They are employed on a twelve months' basis and have a month's vacation. The director is also in charge of training enterprises and acts as adviser in the other areas. Hundreds of the Los Angeles churches use volunteers only.

Better training for vacation church school work is developing. Many places have one-day insti-

tutes, some have six nights of leadership education classes on vacation church schools, a few have laboratory training schools or workshop. Philadelphia has a training school on six Saturday mornings, New York City continues all day on six Saturdays, and Chicago has six Saturdays of one-day institutes in various sections of the city. A presbytery in Texas had a laboratory school for the young workers who were going to teach near by in housing areas.

The inspiration and knowledge which come from these shared experiences are of great value in improving and extending this work.

Planning an Interesting Program

When the training school uses an attractive theme and good textbooks, the leaders of the local schools are helped to do so, also. Several of the denominations have prepared excellent courses.

One group in New York State chose a theme emphasizing God's work in His world. They became Indians and held their school on the lakeside. The year that the World's Fair was held in New York, the training school chose a theme emphasizing world friendship. They made use of the fact that sixty nations had come to visit

them. The study of the "Life of Christ" in vacation church schools had greatly influenced the lives of many boys and girls. Whole neighborhoods have been changed when boys and girls study Christian influences in a community.

Newer adaptations of methods are appearing, such as visual aids of all kinds. The basic bulletin and nine picture guides to help vacation schools with visual aids from the International Council of Religious Education are proving helpful. One school in Los Angeles entertained the visitors in their Palestinian house which was made of screens covered with white shelf paper and crayoned in black to look like stones. Jewish bread was served with fruit juice. A Jewish synagogue school was in session in Yonkers, New York. The "Rabbi" sat on a stool while the circle of boys rocked back and forth reciting Scripture. Beautiful worship centers have made barren rooms worshipful and boys and girls have conducted splendid worship services. In one junior department the interest groups met in the following rooms: "The Information Booth," "The Library and Art Gallery," "The Temple Court," "The Nazareth Workshop," "The Council of Elders'

Room" and the "Recreation Room." Each group prepared programs and worship services for all and planned service projects for others.

Giving "newscasts" from imaginary radios help boys and girls to review and record their work. Choral speech was demonstrated by a group of children in a Boston vacation church school conference in a beautiful presentation. A fine rhythm band by the beginners greeted the visitors in a school in Burlington, Iowa. Lesson plans and careful planning are the secret to interesting programs.

Sponsoring Vacation Church Schools

Successful vacation church schools have been sponsored by various groups. Sometimes they are sponsored by a local church; a group of churches in a local district; a city, county or state council of churches and religious education; or a federation of churches.

The vacation church schools sponsoring committees which are appointed or elected officially by the sponsoring body or bodies have a better opportunity to interest the whole constituency than those who have to work alone. This is particularly true if the official and

lay groups are represented on this committee. When there is a committee or board responsible for the whole Christian education program of the church, such committee or board has taken responsibility for the vacation church school, of course. Only as the vacation school is integrated into the total Christian education program of the church, can it bear its best fruit. This is true even in community schools where it is more difficult to accomplish. Just as a board of education is responsible for a public school, so a sponsoring committee is responsible for the vacation church school.

When this sponsoring committee takes its work seriously, it makes long term plans and does not limit its interest to one school, but joins with others to see that there are vacation schools to reach every child in the community, city and county.

This committee is responsible for the whole school. There are some special items which always have to be planned, such as publicity, finance, time schedules, and co-operation with other groups.

Planning Promotion and Publicity

The whole community should be interested, but there are special

groups to whom to appeal. For the prospective pupils there are attractive postcards available; many groups mimeograph attractive dodgers. For the parents, visits and letters are effective. For the adults, sermons, announcements, actions by proper boards and services dedicating the teachers and officers of the vacation church schools have all proved helpful. Other successful methods include: posters, movies or 2x2 slides, showing pictures of last year's schools; movie announcement "trailers," newspapers and radio. In one city all the various agencies having summer programs for boys and girls listed them on mimeographed charts showing the nature of each program, place and sponsorship. These were distributed through the public schools.

Building the Budget

Many churches are putting vacation church schools in their regular church budgets as an ongoing Christian education part of their year's work. Others take special offerings. In South Bend, Indiana, the Lenten Services provided funds for the vacation schools in housing areas. Organized classes and Sunday church schools contribute. In Dayton, Ohio, the War Fund

Chest matched the Federation of Churches with \$5,000, each, to provide vacation schools and recreation in housing areas and trailer camps. In various towns in Connecticut, the Councils of Church Women made gifts at their May luncheons for vacation church schools. In Muskegon, Michigan, the town-wide Social Planning Council was looking for good summer programs to guard against juvenile delinquency. They turned to the church leaders for the vacation school program. The churches co-operated with one another in holding eleven community schools. The service clubs, PTA and other groups helped them raise the budget of \$2,500 and the public schools were opened for their use. The newspapers and radio stations asked them for news items.

Arranging the Time Schedule

Most boys and girls have nine to twelve weeks of summer vacation. Churches are beginning to

realize how valuable this time is for Christian education. A few places were able to hold schools all day and all summer, including many recreation features. These were to meet especially great needs. Other groups have adapted their time to co-operate with other groups and to get the time of pupils and teachers. A rural church had family vacation church school in the evenings twice a week. A town school omitted school on Monday (wash day) and then added another week to the school. One church used hot afternoons, holding their church in the cool church basement. Every week in the summer is used by some group.

By working with other groups such as the YMCA, YWCA, clubs and playgrounds, vacation church schools have been planned without overlapping in the work of these groups. The churches are helping in reaching the boys and girls with full and rich summer programs!

Is It Right?

\$200 a year for each man, woman, and child in America goes for luxuries; \$120 per person is spent to help pay the annual crime bill; 50 cents a person is given for religious purposes—only a very small fraction of this goes for religious education. May this throw some light on conditions in our beloved country today?

The Church School Consultant

By EBBA LOUISE WAHLSTROM

OH, DEAR!" sighs the church school teacher, as she sits down with the family at the dinner table. "You know how long I worked on the lesson for today. I tried so hard. But for some reason, it just didn't click."

Might we suggest that you talk it over with your church school consultant; perhaps she could help you with your difficulty.

"But," says the distressed teacher, "we have no church school consultant."

This, no doubt, is true, because church school consultants are almost non-existent. But need they be? Come, let us locate one for your local church school, or perhaps a consultant who would be able to serve all the schools in your church district.

To find a person qualified for the position of a church school consultant, we will, of course, go to the teaching profession. Public school teachers have always been helpful in Sunday schools. Therefore, although she may not now be actively engaged, our consultant has had experience in this field of

work. She knows its joys and its hardships. She is acquainted with the limitations and the physical handicaps of the average church school. Yet, in spite of all this, she has a sympathetic attitude and is cognizant of the church school's great contribution to children and to society.

This person is or has been an outstanding teacher. She may now be serving in some executive capacity. If still engaged in actual teaching, one would enjoy visiting her schoolroom. The children are happily at work. Emotional upsets are at a minimum because this teacher understands children.

Besides her first-hand practical knowledge of children, this teacher is acquainted with scientific studies and research in the fields of child psychology and mental health for guidance in her practices. She is familiar with the current and practical theories of modern education, and she sincerely believes in the total development of all children.

And as one may expect, because of her versatile qualities, this person has served on various teachers'

committees. No doubt she has been sent as a representative to conventions, conferences, and workshops. Here the ability and tact shown in working with fellow teachers has proven her to be a leader.

Surprising but true, a teacher with these qualifications could be found in nearly every community. Let's locate her and others like her, and use them.

Now invite the consultant to visit your class next Sunday. Later, at a conference, helpful suggestions such as these may be made:

Were your people as comfortable as they might have been? Three quarters of an hour is a long time to sit on chairs where one's feet do not touch the floor. One can secure folding chairs that are made to fit children of the younger groups. Interest is usually better if the children can gather around a table. Could the children make it their project to secure table and chairs for their group?

Or: Could the attendance and collection be entirely disposed of before your work begins? Your lesson was progressing very nicely until the secretary came in. After that the interest of your group was completely gone.

Or: What do your boys do during the week? Do they belong

to the same Scout Troop? Could you capitalize on their outside interests to stimulate their interest in their Sunday's lesson?

Or: Jimmie seems to be your problem child. What do you know of his parents? Have you ever visited his home? I wonder if he had had any breakfast that Sunday?

Or: Would it have been possible to have carried the lesson a step farther and helped the children make a practical application of the truth learned?

Or: I'll send you a book that will be very helpful. Chapter V will be especially good on that topic.

Or: Here is the name and address of a company that puts out excellent maps. One of the Palestine area would have helped your lesson considerably.

Or: I think that you are doing a good piece of work. The children were vitally interested. You need more faith in your ability.

In every church school there are problems which confront the whole group of teachers. Possibly they are the problems of all the schools in the district. Questions such as the following vex many of them:

1. Since we are unable to build a new church or to provide a separate building for the church

school, how can we remake our present quarters into inviting and comfortable places where children will enjoy coming?

2. What activities may be undertaken by our church school, so that the children may be "doers of the Word and not hearers only"?

3. How can the church school be reorganized so as to provide for actual participation by the children in their own worship services?

These, as well as other problems could be the basis for local or district workshops, not conventions, workshops where the teachers may sit down together to study and discuss their own needs.

Here the aid of the consultant would be of great value. She might help in making the necessary ar-

rangements for the workshop. She would be able to help the teachers locate books and other needed materials. She would also give guidance, when expedient, so that the perplexing problems might reach solutions resulting in action.

"What about the consultant's remuneration?" says our distressed teacher.

It is, of course, something to be considered. The Bible says, "The laborer is worthy of his hire." However, this factor need not be an insurmountable obstacle. "Where there's a will, there's a way" is still true today. An investment in a consultant will pay great dividends in the improvement of the church school. Why not try it?

Many people make the mistake of thinking that freedom *of* religion means freedom *from* religion.

Parents and the Sunday School

By JULIA W. WOLFE

NOT LONG AGO the workers in a certain church began to wake up to the fact that the link between the Sunday school and the parents of the children who attended it was not a strong one.

The fathers and mothers, in the main, were usually present at the Christmas and Easter programs; and they saw to it that the children went regularly to Sunday school, and were provided with money for the collection. But there, apparently, their responsibility, as well as their interest, came to an end. Superintendents and teachers accepted the situation not with resignation but certainly without resistance. They were sorry that the parents were delinquent, but they never charged them openly with their delinquency or sought to bridge the gulf between the home and the Sunday school.

But help came from unexpected sources. The minister of the church, who was unaware of the situation, had been asked to take over a class of boys. From the out-

set the new teacher assumed that every one of the parents of the boys was as much interested as he himself was in the success of his venture. After a few weeks he wrote a letter to the parents of each one of his pupils.

He told in the letters of the interest that the boys took in their work and mentioned the traits that he had noticed in the particular boy about whom he was writing. Furthermore, he suggested ways in which the parents could help their son with his weekly Sunday school work. After pointing out the main purpose of the lesson series for the year, the writer asked the parents if one of them would not make it a personal matter to see that their son prepared the lesson for that week. He asked them, further, to discuss the lesson with the boy and do what they could to strengthen his interest in his work and his sense of responsibility as a member of the Sunday school.

To his gratification he received several prompt replies. Some of the writers expressed their appreciation of the interest that he was

taking in their sons; others asked for further instructions; all promised to follow his suggestions.

After the minister had taught the class for a while, carrying out his own plans for it in his own way, he made a full report at a teachers' meeting. The report was suggestive and inspiring. It showed the rest of the teachers what determination and ingenuity can accomplish when supported by unfailing patience. Moreover, it pointed out just what was the trouble at the bottom of the parent-teacher difficulty. There had never been any real effort to draw the parents into connection with Sunday school work. The teachers had indeed been aware of the gulf fixed between the Sunday school and the home; what they had not seen was the fact that the gulf could be crossed from one direction as well as from the other. When that fact dawned on them they admitted their mistake.

From that time a change of method began. There were difficulties, of course, and backslidings and discouragements. Not every teacher followed the new plan. Some pleaded lack of time; others, exceptionally indifferent parents. But a sufficient number did follow the plan to bring about a

marked improvement. The lesson period ceased to drag; teaching no longer seemed drudgery. It was proved beyond doubt that the time and the effort expended in getting into touch with the parents were abundantly repaid by the fresh inspiration that resulted from that contact.

The parents were ready to acknowledge their own share of the benefit. It was evident that the idea of being a part of the Sunday school life had not occurred to them. When the indirect suggestion was made they had responded gladly. They agreed that the half hour a day that they spent with their sons, studying the appointed lesson and helping them with the class work was a privilege, not a task. Several fathers confessed that the minister's appeal had directed their attention to the weak spot in home life, namely, the lack of spiritual fellowship with their children. Getting together for a while nearly every day over the Sunday school work had set up a comradely intercourse that promised great things. They were finding that the religious life of the child is as essential as any other part of his home life, and were beginning to regard the Sunday school as something more than a place to which

the younger children of the household were packed off every Sunday, and to realize that it has a claim on them as well as on the child.

A sort of by-product of the new state of affairs was the boys' increased willingness to do the weekly handwork that the Sunday school assigned to them. The fact that their people took an interest in the things that they made added zest to the work. Maps of the Holy Land, books with illustrations for sacred songs, even little essays on assigned subjects were turned in with pride. When a large collection of such articles had accumulated, the teachers exhibited it on long tables for the benefit of the whole congregation. The older people realized that the collection represented an important part of the children's Sunday school experience, that it expressed in crude form what they had learned of religious history and spiritual truth.

Before one year had passed the

new plan yielded a yet richer harvest. Twenty young candidates were being prepared for confirmation. The minister, seeing his opportunity, invited their parents to attend some of the meetings of the class. The older people, responding, became deeply interested in their children's religious studies. They attended the study period with regularity and with increasing zeal.

When the day came for the candidates to be admitted to full membership, the parents were asked to come up to the chancel, and stand with them. It was after this that some of the full fruits of the early sowing were seen; in several instances a father or mother who was not a member of the church was moved to confess Christ and join the church. A new era had begun in that town. The gulf between Sunday school and home had been bridged, and the old story "Parents will not co-operate," was heard no more.

Man is a miserable creature who spends a great deal of time trying to get his conscience and his desires tuned to the same wavelength.—OLIN MILLER.

To See Is to Believe

By HERMAN J. SWEET

THERE is nothing new about the use of observation as a means of teacher education. Yet with all its proven worth the church has been slow to make full use of it as a method for training workers. Occasionally one hears of a local church which encourages its workers to visit the public schools and other church school classes. Here and there a religious education council in a local church selects outstanding departments in other church schools and arranges for orderly, guided visitation. Other demonstration projects come to light from time to time. But in the main most of our leadership education goes on by lecture, discussion, and study of materials, apart from any actual teaching situation.

There are difficulties, to be sure. Good situations for observation are not always available. But they can be set up. It is our purpose here to describe briefly two or three projects and point out some of the qualifications which made them successful. Perhaps this will encourage more experimentation.

A Sunday afternoon demonstration school

In one small city, two teachers with considerable experience in a summer laboratory school of Christian education, were asked to conduct demonstration classes for the kindergarten and junior teachers of several local churches. Careful plans were made. A limited number of children from the participating churches were invited to enroll and a ready response was found. About twenty-five workers were involved.

The departments met on Sunday afternoons for six weeks. The instructors spent the first half hour with the observers by themselves, sharing as fully as possible the steps in their preparation and their plans for the session. Then there was a full hour with the children, followed by another hour with the observers for evaluation, discussion, assignments and study of resource materials.

Course cards were issued to those who completed the work, credit being given in the material and methods courses, Second Series

of the Standard Curriculum. Subsequent investigation revealed a much more effective carry-over than had been the case with the usual type of leadership class. Why could not many leadership schools introduce this as a special feature of their program each year?

A Friday evening school

In another city a group of junior children, enrolled from several participating churches, came together on Friday evenings for six weeks. A committee of parents cooperated in bringing the children and taking them home so that the teachers were free of this responsibility. A schedule similar to the above was followed, with the hour from seven to eight being given to the children. The student teachers had opportunity to observe skilled leaders working with the children, and to share fully with these leaders in reviewing the steps in preparation, evaluating the outcomes, and working out their assignments for study. In this situation the observers participated in some of the activities.

There was no claim that the situation duplicated that which a teacher might face in her own school. Rather the emphasis was on the free and full participation

of children in sharing with adults the planning and carrying through of a unit of study. Particular skills were demonstrated such as dramatization and choral speaking, and certain handcrafts. Considerable attention was given to helping the observers study the attitudes and response of the children. Also there was much attention to resources. Said one instructor, "My group of teachers were amazed at the resources I had used in my preparation. They said, 'No wonder we can't teach well; we don't have anything to work with.'"

Why these schools were helpful

Both of the above projects were highly fruitful. Let us review some of the factors which made them so.

They were supervised by competent workers who made careful preparation. It was frankly acknowledged that they did not entirely parallel the situations which teachers might face in their own departments or classes and care was taken not to make them artificial by attempting consciously to reproduce those conditions. Rather, there was an effort to make the observation class a natural, creative experience for children and teachers. The children were not "object lessons" or "guinea pigs,"

but participating members in a group experience designed to be of greatest possible value in itself and not just a means to an end.

Observers were given an opportunity to witness, not an attempt to handle a group of children as the leader imagined they might be handled in some other setting on Sunday morning, but an effort to give children the most valuable and satisfying experience possible in the activity in which they were then sharing. The children were not made to feel that they were being used to show adults how to work with children. They were aware only that they had been asked to share in an interesting group-learning activity with a number of older persons.

There was an effort to play

down "mechanics" and to lift up the dynamic factors in the child's response, spontaneous interest and co-operation. There was an attempt to see the teaching process in terms of persons, group outcomes, and fellowship in learning, rather than in terms of controls and teacher-directed responses. Teachers were helped to see the principles involved. They were helped to understand those qualities of physical setting, planning, purpose, co-operation, and relationships of teachers and children which carry a group forward in discovery, learning, and right attitudes.

—*International Journal of Religious Education.*

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Prayer Also Changes People

A young preacher had just settled in his first pastorate in Philadelphia, when he was visited one evening by one of the laymen in his church.

The man said bluntly to him, "You are not a strong preacher. In the usual order of things you will fail here, but a little group of us have agreed to gather every Sunday morning to pray for you."

The young man saw that group of people grow to more than one thousand praying weekly for their pastor.

The minister was J. Wilbur Chapman who grew to become one of the greatest preachers America has ever known.—*Sunday.*

Home Education

Issued by the National Kindergarten Association

Shared Reading

By LUCIA MALLORY

PLEASE come in and join us, Lucia," Blanche Varian said cordially, as I stood at her door one Sunday afternoon last January. "We're reading our Christmas books."

I followed my friend into the living room, expecting to find each member of her family occupied with his own book. Instead of that, only small Joyce held a book. The others were grouped around her, as if they had been listening.

"Won't you please read to us, Miss Mallory?" Joyce entreated me after our greetings were over. "This is Tommie's new book."

"Haven't you been taking turns at reading?" I inquired.

"Yes, Miss Mallory," Joyce replied, "but we like to hear you tell stories at the library—"

"I'll read when it comes my turn, Joyce," I promised. "Won't you go on with what you were reading when I came in?"

Joyce finished her page of a

story of courage and adventure that has been loved by young and old readers for over fifty years.

The book passed from hand to hand, with each one reading a few pages, and sometimes pausing to add an appreciative comment. Though I had read the book many times, I found the characters taking on new life and the phrases glowing with more warmth and beauty than I had ever sensed in silent reading.

"I don't know when I have enjoyed an afternoon so much," I told Blanche when I was leaving. "You were wonderfully kind to let me share your reading hour!"

"I am glad you like our family book club," she replied with a smile. "I'll tell you more about it some day."

Blanche fulfilled her promise the next time she came to the library. She is a member of the city library board, and I am children's librarian.

"You know how much my husband and I love books, Lucia," she began, "and how hard I have tried as a library board member."

to make books attractive to all of the children in the city. You'll be surprised when I tell you that one of our own children didn't care much about books a year ago. Of course Tom and I realized that Tommie shouldn't be expected to be exactly like his parents, and we didn't want to force him to read—we wanted him to become interested in books, naturally.

"At Christmas time a year ago, Tom gave Tommie a book that had been a favorite in his own childhood. Tom was keenly disappointed at his son's lack of interest in the book.

"Why couldn't we all read Tommie's book together?" I suggested.

"Do you think the children would enjoy that?" Tom asked doubtfully.

"Tommie likes to go fishing with you—he likes to work in the garden with you," I answered. "I believe he would like reading with you, too."

"Tom finally agreed that it might be worth while to try the experiment.

"The children were interested from the first day we read together. After Tommie's book was finished—and our son did enjoy it—Helen and Joyce brought out

their Christmas books to be read. Then Tommie, one day, brought home from school a book on modern scientific developments. This the girls and I enjoyed as much as he and his father did.

"Reading together did more than introduce the children to our own best-loved book friends; we soon found out that the plan had some fine by-products. There was a quickened interest in science, Joyce became a better reader so as to take her place with her older brother and sister, and less attention on the part of all the children was now given to books and periodicals of doubtful value.

"Often the children bring in their friends," Blanche concluded, "and they are welcome to share our reading hour."

Festivals in the Home

By LAURA GRAY

MISS HEART walked toward the Sumner's home intent on doing a good deed. Mrs. Sumner, she knew, was away.

A boy of eight answered her knock on the door of the roomy old house.

"Is Mabel in, Billy?" Mabel, fifteen and eldest of the seven

Sumners, was surely the one to speak to first.

"Yes, come in; here she is." He led her into the comfortable living room.

"Mabel," the visitor addressed a fair, young girl who came in through another doorway, "how would you like to come on a picnic with me this morning? I want all of you to come."

"Thank you, Miss Heart. That certainly is kind of you! But this is Mother's birthday. She's coming home from Aunt Nan's. Aunt Nan has been sick, and Mother has been helping her. Come and see the cake we've made!" A happy smile lit up her sweet face.

On the kitchen table was a magnificent confection.

"Mabel made it and iced it, but we put the candles on," a boy of seven said, pointing to pink tapers.

"We don't know how old Mother is, so we put on all the candles that were in the box," confided another little fellow.

The front door burst open, and ten-year-old Madge ran in. "Hi, everybody! I found some lovely flowers—beauties!—up on the hill where the burned house is." She laid an armful of syringa, honeysuckle, iris, and field daisies on the table. She was as dark as Mabel was

fair, and her round face sparkled. "Where are there some vases? Martin Matt says the train is right on time!"

With this announcement the family broke into hurrahs.

"We're going to decorate the rooms. Daddy's bringing a lovely present for Mother, and each of us has a present for her, too!" piped a wee girl, dancing with excitement. "It's almost like Christmas!"

"Indeed, that's fine!" Miss Heart moved toward the door. "Perhaps another day you would like a picnic."

"Yes, we would love one!" Mabel showed the visitor out.

Festivals serve not only as pleasurable occasions, but also to bind those who take part into a close relationship. Home festivals, especially, have greater value than we sometimes realize.

Dad has a birthday. Mother and Son together buy a gift. This is an exciting secret just between Mother and the boy.

Another day, Son has a birthday—his festival! Thanksgiving, Christmas, what wonderful times these can be, with friends and relatives! So many surprises! Such happy conversation!

Halloween, St. Valentine's Day,

Fourth of July—don't let any slip by unnoticed. Even the departure or return of a member of the family often offers an opportunity for a celebration. These events need not take much energy or outlay, and they do pay. On April first, a simple trick played on the children at breakfast time will send them smiling to school, and can show them the kind of joke that is worth while.

Yes, home festivals no matter how simple enrich family life, and so are well worth cultivating.

Too Many Toys

By JANET T. VAN OSDEL

BESS DEVON, on her way home from her primary grade school, stopped at her sister Martha's bungalow to announce, "Edgar's asked me to marry him! Now we'll have a real child psychologist in the family!"

"Gracious!" exclaimed Martha. "I wonder what he'll think of Tommy!"

"This evening will tell!" laughed Bess. "We're calling."

"I hope you'll be happy, Bess, but a psychologist sounds—"

"All right to me!" finished Bess, her blue eyes shining.

Martha had just welcomed Bess and Edgar that evening when in came Tommy, dragging a big carton of toys.

"Say 'Good evening,' Tommy," prompted Martha.

"Don't want to," responded Tommy, and he ran out to return with a second carton, then a third.

He dumped the contents of the three boxes on the blue velvet rug and began to play noisily—showing off.

Martha nervously tried to turn Edgar's attention from Tommy, but Edgar did not even hear her speak. His gray eyes were riveted on the hodgepodge of toys that surrounded Tommy.

"I've counted forty-nine toys," he stated. "A child should have but one plaything at a time."

"*Gracious!*" cried Martha. "Tommy always plays with all his toys at once. He couldn't play any other way!"

"You mean perhaps that he jumps from one toy to another until he has handled them all," said Edgar. "That is why he should have but one at a time. His mind will not then be darting off to all those other things. He will concentrate on the one he has, and keep thinking of new ways to employ it. This develops the imagina-

tion and inventive ability. Occasionally he'll probably manufacture something to carry out an idea for using this single toy."

"Really!" exclaimed Martha, her brown eyes eager. "He might even become an Edison! Tommy, choose one toy to play with!"

"No!" protested Tommy.

"Choose one!" Edgar ordered.

Tommy sat up straight and stared at Edgar.

"I'll choose one Indian club," he decided meekly.

"Take the two. They belong together," said Edgar. "Put the other things into the boxes and take the boxes away. It's not nice to fill your mother's pretty room with your playthings, especially when she has guests. And making those distracting noises, imitating trains and airplanes—so that other people can't hear themselves talk—is that polite?"

"No," replied Tommy, packing toys but keeping his eyes on Edgar's lean brown face.

"You are certainly gaining an influence over him," whispered Martha.

"Children like and respect the truth," explained Edgar.

"Did you have only one toy at a time, Edgar?" asked Bess when Tommy was quietly playing with his clubs.

"I did not have even one," sighed Edgar.

For a moment his eyes were sad with memories, then he brightened as he said, "Until I found an iron hoop in our alley! I played a hundred different games with that hoop. It was a horse, a motorcycle, an automobile, a dog, a plane, a ship! I scoured the earth with it, and even hooped right up into the sky and landed on the moon, bumping a few stars out of my way!"

"One toy set your imagination working!" laughed Bess, her eyes tender.

"Maybe Tommy will grow up to be like Edgar," suggested Martha wistfully. "Oh, look at him!! He's teaching a class how to use Indian clubs! Listen! He's telling them! Now he's showing them!! Never before has he played so—so—"

"Progressively," supplemented Edgar.

"Oh, Edgar!" sighed Martha blissfully.

Activities in the Realm of Christian Education

By I. O. NOTHSTEIN

When Laborers Go into the Harvest. When the Mount Olivet Lutheran Church (Augustana Synod) of Minneapolis, Minn., had completed a recent membership drive it was found that besides the adult church members secured, 162 children had been added to the Sunday school roll. The congregation is now planning to provide additional space in the church and twenty-two Sunday school rooms and a chapel. A youth center is also being projected.

* * *

The Proper Outlook. "Five hundred Onondaga County, N. Y., school teachers heard Dr. Edwin R. Van Kleeck, assistant commissioner of education in charge of instruction for the New York State Department of Education, urge them to co-operate with efforts to promote the released time plan of religious education. 'Of course,' he said, 'these classes may interfere with basketball practice or tap dancing. What of it! He believes that only a return to re-

ligion will solve the problem of juvenile delinquency."—*The Lutheran Standard.*

* * *

Faithful Work Appreciated. At the services of the Sunday school of St. Paul's Church (U.L.C.A.), Uniontown, Md., on a recent Sunday, Mr. Harry B. Fogle, who has served as superintendent and active leader in the life of the congregation for twenty-five years, was presented with a War Savings Bond as a token of appreciation of his untiring labors during a quarter of a century.

* * *

Plans for Religious Education on the Radio. The International Council of Religious Education has announced the chartering of a new department, which will operate under the name of "International Radio Productions," whose twofold purpose will be: 1. To develop radio programs for the church generally and for the religious education movement more specifically, which will be in keep-

ing with the basic tenets of the church and will help it to realize its purpose and which will fulfill the highest technical standards of the radio professional field. 2. To assist the International Council of Religious Education and its member agencies in developing those specific radio projects which will strengthen their services in those fields which they exist to serve.

The first project of the radio department is the production of "Victorious Living," which began in January. The Rev. E. J. Walker of Chicago, the new director of the department, has been planning and directing a daily broadcast for school children which was heard from WLS by nearly a million pupils in classrooms daily for the last two years. "Victorious Living" will present dramatic interpretations of factual religious experiences of everyday people.

* * *

Character Education in the Church School. Dr. E. M. Ligon, professor of psychology in Union College, Schenectady, N. Y., has for the last ten years been conducting a series of studies and clinics to determine the best methods of teaching character development to children. The last issue of *Religious Education* is largely de-

voted to Prof. Ligon's work and findings, which are too extensive to be summarized here. The first article is by Prof. Ligon and describes the minimum essentials of character education. Then follow four articles by visitors to the clinics, and the series closes with two more articles by Prof. Ligon: the first: "Individual Character Education," and the second: "An Outline of Trait-Habit-Attitude Goals for Character Education."

Among the points especially emphasized in the articles are the following: (a) The laws of character and personality are as inherent in the nature of the universe as the laws of gravitation, (b) these laws are complex, not simple, (c) character development is a seven-day-a-week job and must be shared by the home and the church school, (d) yet it is inevitably the responsibility of the church to take the leadership in this field.

The articles and discussions are well worth reading by pastors and teachers both of the church schools and of the public schools.

* * *

An Active Mission School. A Lutheran mission Sunday school in Front Royal, Va. (U. L. C. A.) before it had celebrated its first birthday, learned of a near-by com-

munity where there lived a number of unchurched people, and where there was need of religious work. They investigated the possibilities and prospects of opening a Sunday school. Teachers and officers from the mission school volunteered for the work and opened a school on Sunday afternoons in the only available place, the public school building. More than forty persons were present at the first meeting, and the school has become a real inspiration to the community, as well as to the sponsoring congregation. Most of the parents did not formerly belong to any church and many of the children never had attended Sunday school. As fast as possible teachers and leaders from the local community were placed in charge of the work, while the mission school supplied the additional workers necessary. Already a dozen young people from this group without Lutheran background have been added to the membership of the sponsoring church and more are being instructed to that end. The school itself has paid for all its literature and other incidentals necessary for its operation, has contributed to the church building fund and to the benevolent work of the congregation.

Field Worker. The Commission on Parish Education of the Minnesota Conference of the Augustana Synod has announced in *The Advance* that Miss Cecelia Anderson has entered upon her duties as field worker in Minnesota and adjacent states.

Miss Anderson is the first of three field workers provided for in plans adopted at the last meeting of the Augustana Synod. She will work in close co-operation with the conference's Commission on Parish Education, and will spend a considerable part of her time visiting congregations and meeting with teachers and other groups in the interests of Christian education. Miss Anderson is a graduate of the Willmar High School, and has also attended Morris Agricultural School, the Lutheran Bible Institute and the University of Minnesota. For several years she was the county 4-H club leader in Kandiyohi and Jackson Counties. From 1939 to 1943 she did survey and parish work for the Board of Home Missions of the Augustana Synod. She brings to her new assignment a rich background of experience as well as love for and understanding of the work of the church.

Annual Bible Conference. A fall Bible Conference has become an annual event in the Sillerud Lutheran Church, Balaton, Minn. The pastor, the Rev. Karl W. Nelson, conducted the latest conference for three days in October, and the Rev. Lambert Engwall of Winthrop was the guest Bible teacher.

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Planning for Peace Time. Redeemer Lutheran Church (U. L. C. A.), Binghamton, N. Y., will erect a \$50,000 educational building adjacent to the present church.

The Teacher of Youth

Continued from page 2

that they be provided with a background and purpose in life. Having Christian principles thoroughly fixed in their hearts, and exemplified for them by their teacher, they will be aided in choosing the right course. Even our Christian homes need the aid of church and school. Consecrated teachers will make it possible for children committed to their special care to be partakers with them "in all good things." We refer to Galatians 6. 6, translated as follows: "Moreover, let him who is being instructed in the word be partaker with the one in-

structing him, in all good things." Dr. Lenski explains this passage thus: "The one instructing has the good things; the one being instructed is to proceed to participate in them, in *all* of them. The riches are with the teacher of the Word, the poverty is with the pupil, and the pupil is to institute 'fellowship' with the teacher that he, the pupil, may be enriched. Yes, there are not only burdens in which we must fellowship and aid those who bear them; there are also 'good things,' spiritually and morally beneficial, in which we should delight to have fellowship with those who possess these good things. Who should have more of them than our teachers! The burdens are painful, the good things conducive to salvation, delightful. With those who have burdens and with those who have these good things we should keep fellowship, making ourselves fellow with them."

As teachers we truly have golden opportunity of cultivating the spiritual side of our pupils' lives. As we bend the twig, so the mighty oak will grow. But lest we grow careless or indifferent let us remember our grave responsibility. We are dealing with immortal souls, guiding lives for eternity.